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# Animal Crackers

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**Acupuncture** is becoming recognized in the Western Hemisphere as a method of treating some conditions in animals. It has been accepted in the Orient for centuries. There is an International Veterinary Acupuncture Society which meets regularly for the exchange of information. The first English-language text, "Veterinary Acupuncture," was co-authored by Alan M. Klide, V.M.D., associate professor of anesthesia at our School of Veterinary Medicine and Shiu H. Kung, Ph.D. Since this, several other books have been published around the world.

# Animal

In our Large Animal Clinic, acupuncture has been used in treating horses with chronic back pain and other painful conditions. The treatments are given once a week for eight weeks. It usually takes three to five treatments before signs of improvement are seen. After eight treatments, the duration of effect is a variable, unpredictable length of time—from weeks to years. Individual animals may require additional treatments at varying intervals, but usually the interval is constant for a particular patient.

The treatments are reported to decrease muscle spasms and block the transmission of pain sensation between the source of pain and the brain. In most cases, needles are placed at the acupuncture points and left in place for 15 to 30 minutes.

Dogs and cats are being treated in this manner for various painful conditions by veterinarians in different parts of the country.

**Revaccination** of dogs and cats can be considered a form of insurance. While it may not be necessary, it may prevent illness and is recommended by most veterinarians. Often it is included with the annual physical examination.

Vaccination against rabies is extremely important in dogs and cats. There are vaccines available that give protection for three years while others require annual revaccination. Using the newer rabies vaccines, dogs and cats need only be vaccinated every three years. Rabies is a public health problem and the incidence of this disease in wildlife is increasing. The vaccinated dog provides a protective barrier between wildlife and humans. Dog and cat owners should keep rabies vaccinations up-to-date.

There are many different methods of vaccinating puppies and kittens. The problem here is the protection received through the mother's milk which neutralizes the modified-live vaccines. It is possible to determine the amount of maternal antibody present by testing the blood of the mother and preparing a nomograph to show how long there will be protection in the offspring. This may last as long as sixteen weeks.

Yearly vaccination is recommended against most diseases. This should be continued for the lifetime of the animal. It may not be necessary but the insurance it provides can be life-saving. There is some evidence that dogs over seven years old have decreased ability to produce antibodies and revaccination of these older dogs is important for

maintaining immunity. It is assumed this is also true for cats.

In addition to rabies, dogs usually are vaccinated against canine distemper, infectious canine hepatitis, canine parainfluenza and canine parvovirus. Usually, these vaccines contain modified live virus. A killed product is used against leptospirosis and intranasal vaccine is available for use against Bordetella ("Kennel Cough"). Rabies vaccine is given intramuscularly, while the others (which may be combined) are given subcutaneously, except for the intranasal product.

In addition to getting vaccinated against rabies, cats are usually vaccinated against panleukopenia, viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus and pneumonitis.

Rabies vaccine is always given intramuscularly. The others may be given intramuscularly, subcutaneously or intranasally. It is anticipated that a vaccine against feline leukemia will be available in the near future.

Modified live virus vaccines should never be given to pregnant animals. Also, vaccination may not be successful if the animal has been exposed recently to the disease or if it is not in good physical condition. Unfortunately, there are a few animals which are not able to develop immunity.

During the past several months, a number of new canine parvovirus-vaccines, both killed and modified live virus, have come on the market. We have too little experience with these products to make any recommendations concerning their use at this time.

**Choosing a Dog**, particularly if it will be the first canine member of the family, should be done carefully. Most puppies are cute and pictures can be deceiving, so don't base your decisions on "that darling puppy in the pet-shop window" or on the photographs in a book. Think about how the puppy will look when it is mature, how much grooming will be required, and whether or not your home is suitable for the breed selected.

The American Kennel Club recognizes 127 breeds of dogs. Eleven of these breeds have several varieties—championship shows have classes for 138 breeds and varieties (a dog can win best of breed or best of variety). The varieties differ in color or coat-type. In addition, there are eight Miscellaneous breeds (not eligible for championship points). We have "Rare Breeds" not eligible for entry in A.K.C. shows, plus many breeds recognized in Canada and foreign countries but not by the American Kennel Club. Then there are the "random-bred" or mixed breeds.

If you feel you want a pure-bred dog, it is best to visit several all-breed dog shows. Here you can watch the dogs being groomed and talk to their owners. You can get an idea about how big a puppy will be when mature and how much coat care may be required. There are a number of excellent books about different breeds, usually available at dog shows, along with all kinds of equipment. The next step is to visit kennels and see the puppies and their parents. An excellent book to help with your decision is "The Roger Caras Dog Book—A Guide to Purebred Dogs" by Roger Caras (Holt, Rinehart and Winston).

Some families are not sure if they really want a dog or if a dog will fit into their life-style. In this case, a visit to a local animal shelter will help a child find just the right dog. Once adopted, this dog will require the same care as a pure-bred. There will be the same problems with house-breaking, training, etc. Don't adopt a dog unless you are willing to accept responsibility.

Some questions have no definite answer. "How old should the puppy be?" Usually at least eight weeks. "Should we get a male or female?" I feel this is a matter of opinion, as both sexes can make excellent pets.

Responsible dog ownership includes practicing birth control. If you do not have a planned breeding program, males should be neutered and females should be spayed. Before any animals are mated, they should be carefully evaluated. Improvement of the breed should be the purpose. Financial gain is secondary.

## Crackers

### Ferrets.

A surprising number of people are keeping ferrets as pets. They are different, but require the same care as cats, can be litter box-trained and become quite friendly with people.

As a general rule, exotic pets are not recommended but some are becoming quite popular. The problem is mostly in the control of diseases which might be transmitted to humans. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires a permit for ferret ownership.

Ferrets have an unusual problem in that if a female is not bred, she will stay in heat for months and months and develop a fatal anemia. The animal becomes listless, loses its appetite, and will die. The treatment is spaying, preferably during the first year of life.

It is said that ferrets have been domesticated since Roman times and if correctly handled, can live indoors. However, anyone considering any exotic animal as a pet, should do some investigating. You might be asking for trouble. Also, consider what damage might be done if the animal escapes.



## Dog Museum

The Dog Museum of America opened on Sept. 15 with its first exhibit, **Best Friends—Dogs in Art**, encompassing more than fifty works of art, including paintings, sculpture, photographs, prints, and the decorative arts. The exhibit documents the dog in art from prehistoric to modern times. The works exhibited include major Western and Oriental works, showing the great range of art depicting the dog and its relationship to humans.

The Dog Museum was founded in 1981 and it is located on the ground floor of 51 Madison Avenue, New York, NY. It is sponsored by the American Kennel Club Foundation. The goal of the institution is to collect, preserve and exhibit works of art related to the dog. The museum is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. The first exhibit closes Dec. 1, 1982.